



Kentucky Coalition for Healthy Children

Steering Committee Meeting Notes

October 28, 2022, 11:00 to 12:00 EST

Attendees:

Sheila Schuster	Advocacy Action Network	Joseph Frazier,	Center for Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion, KY Chamber of Commerce
Candace Gurley	Aetna Better Health of Kentucky	Jim Tackett, Stephanie Bunge Christina Weeter	Kentucky Department of Education
Ashlea Christiansen	American Health Association	Gannon Tagher	Kentucky Nurses Association, KNA School Nurse Group
Joe Bargione Beverly Winsch	Bounce Coalition	Michelle Malicote	Division of Maternal and Child Health – School Health Branch - Kentucky Department for Public Health
Jessica Lawrence	Cairn Guidance Inc.	Ellen Cartmell	Tobacco Prevention and Cessation Program – Kentucky Department for Public Health
Melissa Goins	Division of Family Resource and Youth Services Centers, CHFS	Emily Beauregard Cara Stewart	Kentucky Voices for Health
Kate McDonald	Feeding Kentucky	Alicia Whatley	Kentucky Youth Advocates
Amalia Mendoza Alexandra Kerley Chloe Atwater	Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky	Ellee Humprey	St. Elizabeth Healthcare
Eva Stone	Jefferson County Public Schools	J. Eric Davis	United Health Care
Lori Vogel	Kentucky Association for School Social Work		

Meeting Objectives:

- The Steering Committee will discuss the recommendations from the KCHC Children’s Mental Health Work Group and finalize the 2023 KCHC Legislative Policy Agenda on children’s mental health issues.

Pre-Meeting Materials Included in Packet to Review:

- Children’s Mental Health 2023 Legislative Policy Agenda - Recommendations from the Children’s Mental Health Work Group
- Children’s Mental Health 2023 Legislative Policy Agenda Survey Results
- KDE Guidance on Corporal Punishment
- Recommendations from the Social and Emotional Health Task Force of the SIAC: [recommendations.pdf \(ky.gov\)](https://www.ky.gov/recommendations.pdf)



Meeting Notes:

I. Member Updates

- The group welcomed Alexandra Kerley, Policy Associate at the Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky, who will be replacing Chloe Atwater as the lead staff for the Kentucky Coalition for Healthy Children's newsletter. Chloe is leaving the Foundation to work as the Health Justice Attorney at the Kentucky Equal Justice Center.
- Alexandra Kerley and Katy Walker will be coordinating the Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky's youth tobacco and vaping products use reduction, and therefore will be attending Steering Committee meetings.
- The group welcomed Ashlea Christiansen, who will be representing the American Heart Association on the Steering Committee.
- ThriveKY is holding its Quarterly Forum with the Cabinet for Health and Family Services on November 15 from 2:00 – 3:00. [ThriveKY](#)
- The 11th Annual Pediatric Behavioral and Mental Health Symposium is taking place on November 04, 2022. This year's symposium will address the impact of prejudice on pediatric mental health. [Symposium.](#)

II. Youth Vaping in Schools

The Steering Committee heard a report by Ellen Cartmell of the Kentucky Tobacco Prevention and Cessation Program on the proposal to reduce youth vaping in schools presented to the Kentucky Interim Joint Committee on Education. The proposal involved harsher penalties for youth who vape in schools, including Class D misdemeanors.

Comments made by the committee members:

- Research shows that harder penalties for students are not successful at achieving a reduction in vaping and may lead young people to hide their addiction and not ask for help quitting. There is a strong indication that youth are becoming addicted due to the addictive qualities of nicotine in vapes.
- Currently law enforcement can confiscate tobacco products for anyone under 21 but they can't cite minors. We do not want youth to have a criminal record, something that will hinder them in their lives, when we know we're dealing with addiction and a health problem for youth.
- Law enforcement shouldn't be involved with schools in this manner. Schools can treat vaping as a school policy offence and use the school-based policies to address it (suspension, detention), but we don't want kids to enter the juvenile justice system.
- Youth PUP laws (Purchase Use and Possession) have not been successful in changing things.
- To reduce youth vaping, we don't need to penalize the students but rather look to adults involved in facilitating the acquisition of vaping products, these are the people who should be accountable for selling and promoting vaping products to youth.
- One policy option is a statewide tobacco retail licensure. This is being considered by the Coalition for a Smoke-Free Tomorrow for this session. Currently no statewide license is to sell tobacco products. The city of Louisville put such a policy in place last year and is analyzing how it is working.
- The Kentucky Synar program is working to educate retailers about the risks and harms of vaping. Also, enforcement of the age of sale law to stop retailers from selling to minors.



[The Synar Amendment requires states to enact and enforce laws prohibiting the sale and distribution of tobacco products to individuals under 18; states must comply with this to receive the Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant awards].

- In terms of the counter arguments to the licensure:
 - The cost to retailers is brought up as a major reason by those that oppose this policy. There is work being done to figure out what the cost would be to balance out the implementation costs for monitoring and compliance. The Louisville license is \$10 per establishment.
 - Vape stores don't want to be regulated.
 - Some legislators might argue that this can be done locally, rather than have a state mandate.
 - Others argue government overreach.
- The Steering Committee members were informed that if they had further questions related to the actions around the licensure policy they could reach out to Alexandra Kerley at the Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky (akerley@healthy-ky.org) or Alicia Whatley at Kentucky Youth Advocates (awhatley@kyyouth.org).

III. School Trauma-Informed Plans

Christina Weeter, Director of the Division of Student Success, Office of Continuous Improvement and Support of the Kentucky Department of Education, reported on the guidance to school districts around trauma-informed plans

Each local board of education was mandated to develop a plan for implementing a trauma-informed approach in its schools by July 1, 2022, with certain requirements for the plan stipulated. School boards were allowed to use their discretion on format, goals, and procedures for their plans and establish their own timelines for implementing and monitoring their plans.

That said, the Kentucky Department of Education has developed a trauma-informed toolkit and posted tools to its website ([KDE Toolkit](#)). Additionally, KDE continues to partner with UK's Center on Trauma and Children to provide free training on trauma-informed practices to educators, schools, and districts across the state.

An important part of the act, highlighted, is the establishment of trauma-informed teams. These are multi-disciplinary teams focused on integrating trauma-informed practices across all areas of school functioning. They will be facilitated by a school counselor or mental health services provider.

Comments:

- In the law, KDE does not have any oversight explicitly stated. Some districts have spontaneously sent their trauma-informed plans. KDE can refer them to the partners at the center for trauma and children.
- Bounce did a writing workshop and offered it in May 2021. Many school districts didn't realize they had to have their plan in by July. It is of some concern that there is no mechanism in place to centralize and analyze these plans; each district can create their own plan. It would be nice if school coops could share plans, have conversations around them.
- These plans need to be dynamic, revisited, not seen as just a compliance issue.
- Family Resource and Youth Services Centers are listed as potential members of the trauma-informed teams. They are an important connection to the students' families and the community.



IV. 2023 Children’s Mental Health Legislative Priorities

The Children’s Mental Health Work Group of the KCHC has been established with 10 members. Six of them met to review the survey results and prepare the recommendations for the Steering Committee discussion. The Steering Committee reviewed the survey results, which ranked the policies, as well as the recommendations for the 2023 Children’s Mental Health Legislative Agenda, which grouped the policies under three areas:

1. Policies that address the shortage of children’s mental health providers and access to these services – Workforce Policies
2. Policies that address the increase in suicide rates in children – Suicide Prevention Policies
3. Policies that protect children from experiences that can cause trauma and impact their mental health – Policies to Protect Children

Dr. Sheila Schuster led the conversation around the recommendations. The following comments were made:

- Related to the survey results around banning conversation “therapy”, information about this discredited practice that attempts to change an individual’s sexual orientation or gender identity was provided. Nine states and the District of Columbia have laws protecting children from conversation “therapy” and 20 more states have recently introduced bills to ban it; 20,000 kids a year that get subjected to it. Suicide rates for trans and nonbinary youth are high, increasing to almost 35% when they are subjected to this form of “therapy”. Most mental health and health associations, including the [American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry](#), and over 50 national organization like these oppose the use of conversion “therapy”.
- Related to youth vaping, various groups are coordinating around the issue, including the Coalition for a Smoke-Free Tomorrow, the Youth Vaping Task Force, the Networking for Kentucky’s Youth, therefore support for policies to reduce vaping and protecting children from punishment strategies exists and strong collaboration with them during this session is important.

The committee approved the recommendations of the Children’s Mental Health work group.

Next Meeting: November 29, 2022, 1:00 to 2:00